

A Short History of Cullercoats Methodist Church (1833 – 2007)



A recompilation of the earlier 1974 version,
extended to include changes up to 2007,
being our 50th Anniversary on the present site.



Preface to this Edition (2007)

As part of our 50th Anniversary of Cullercoats Methodist Church on the present site at the corner of Broadway and Farringdon Road (at the top of Mast Lane) plans were made to hold various celebrations that would be an outreach to our local community. One of these planned items was to hold a Flower Festival with various sections dedicated to what our church does, including one section for each of the users of our premises, and included with this was to be a display of photographs and other ephemeral memorabilia of events past and present. So the call went out to our members to raid their attic hoardings in order to find out who was around fifty years ago and what could we possibly display of our past history, and from this there surfaced many items that most of our current members did not know about.

One of the archived items found was a type-writer format history of our church printed in 1974. It is this document which is reproduced here, brought up to date; augmented with photographs and presented in a more professional format as befits the current technology available to our church.

S.B.Morrison, July 2007

Original Preface (1974)

This short history of Cullercoats Methodist Church has been produced as a result of interest engendered amongst members and friends of the Church by the Stewardship Renewal 'Kaleidoscope' presented in 1974. This 'Kaleidoscope' presented three aspects of the Church's life, namely The Past; The Present; The Future. This short history formed the substance of the Drama Club's presentation of "THE PAST (1833-1957)" which drew upon contemporary records and writings from various sources and which was presented in dramatic form with the use of sound and vision. To this original script I have added several paragraphs to bring the history into the present, along with an acknowledgment of various sources used in compiling the history and a list of Ministers kindly supplied by the Rev. Dr. Denis Inman. I acknowledge, with gratitude, the contributions of the following persons: Mr. Isaac Bayliffe and Mr. M.A. Canning for producing the script; Mrs. H. Canning for typing work; Mr. Kenneth Ormston for technical production of this booklet; Messrs. Jim Small and Fred Alderson for helpful advice, and the people of the Church for their interest and support in this venture.

It is my hope and prayer that this short history will be not only a look into a glorious past, but also an inspiration to go into the unknown future with faith in the same Lord Jesus Christ in whom our forefathers put their trust.

DAVID K. ROBERTS

Cullercoats, November 1974

Genesis

CULLERCOATS. This marine village is distant 1½ miles north from Tynemouth. It is mostly inhabited by fishermen, and contains 92 houses and 536 inhabitants. The township does not extend further than the village, and a small plot of ground that adjoins it. Here are some handsome private houses, four public houses, and warm and cold baths.

The little port has been artificially constructed, but the entrance is rather difficult, and the water shallow. The ruins of an old pier, and of a wagon-way for coals, with a ballast wharf, show that this place has formerly been of more consequence.

Near the town is a small enclosed burying ground belonging to the Society of Friends, but which has not been used since a more convenient one was procured at the west end of North Shields.



This was Cullercoats in 1825. But a hundred years before, the small village of cottages clustering round where the Marden Burn ran into the sea had been a flourishing place, a centre for the export of coal and salt. In a single year (1694) 23,000 tons of coal and 2,000 tons of

salt had been shipped from here. Then came the shattering of prosperity - the pier was washed away. The Whitley pit closed in 1732, and with the loss of cheap fuel for the evaporation process the salt pans were removed to Blyth.

By 1825 the Quakers had deserted Cullercoats. Methodism had not yet arrived. The village was an economic and spiritual backwater.

But a mile and a half away to the south, things were more prosperous:

At Shields there are five roperies. There are also many block-makers, boat-builders, sail-makers, and anchor and chain cable makers; and, by a late enumeration, there were 11 master bakers, 41 grocers and tea dealers, 13 linen and woollen drapers, 19 boot and shoe makers, 11 tailors, 17 cabinet makers, and 13 painters and glaziers. It also appears that no less than 10 pawnbrokers find business in this place.

Dissenters, too, were numerous in North Shields – among them the *Methodist of the New Connexion* and the *Independents*.

The Independent Methodists have a chapel at the head of the town, which formerly belonged to the Presbyterians. About 50 years ago the Methodists built a chapel on the summit of the bank, nearly opposite the theatre; but after some time had elapsed it was discovered that some encroachments had been made on the ground belonging to the Earl of Carlisle, who of course demanded a small acknowledgment from the trustees. This proposal was however pertinaciously rejected, and, the case being brought before a court of justice, the Earl's right was established who took possession of the building. It was then let to the Presbyterian but is now occupied by the "Ranters" or "Primitive Methodists".

Primitive Methodism had been brought to North Shields about three years earlier (in 1822) and by one of the movement's founders – William Clowes – preaching the word as he travelled on foot through the northern counties and into Scotland.

There were other visitors:

North Shields, 3rd October 1832. *“I lectured at South Shields last evening. I came over the river from South Shields about eleven o'clock last night, and made a very firm bargain with myself never to do the like again.”*

That was William Corbett on a rural ride through the North Country. Whether his disinclination to cross the Tyne again was occasioned by a dislike of what he found, or a stormy passage, we will never know. Others were more determined and did return. By 1833 the Northern Mission of the Primitive Methodists was established in Hull. In its minute books for that year we have this account:

“Brethren, this quarter we propose to send three preachers into Northumberland.”

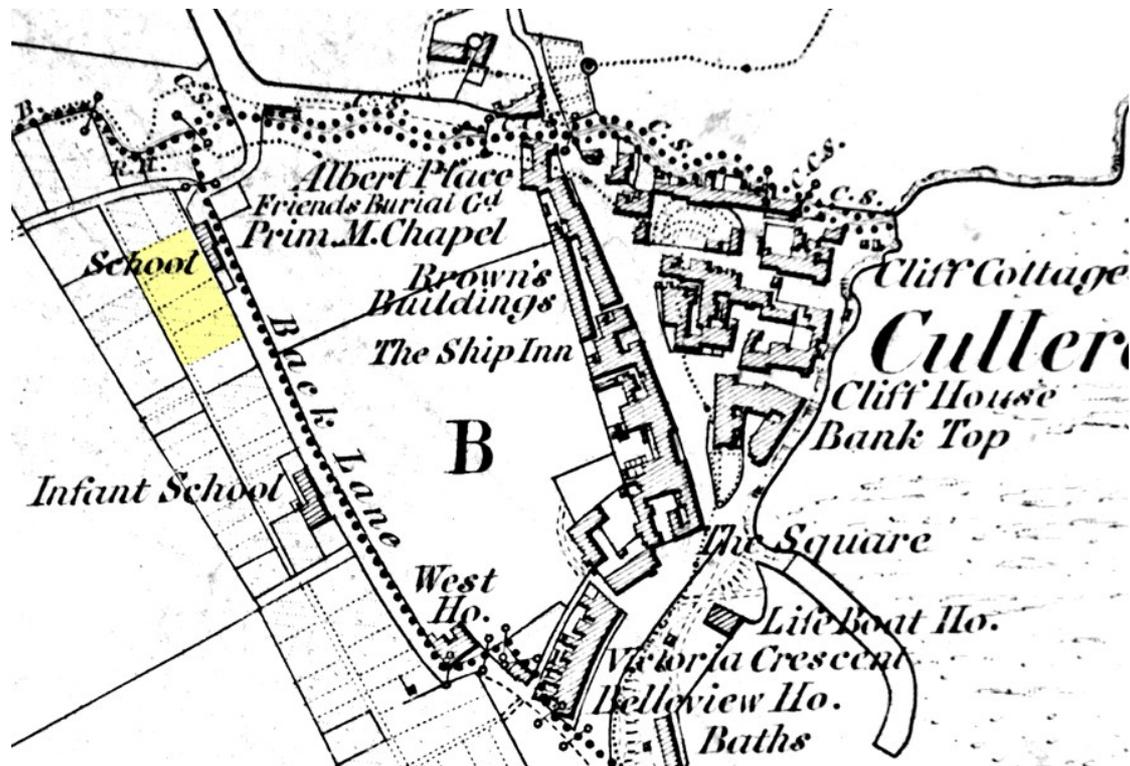
“Brother, it has been laid on my heart that we should mission Cullercoats. Brother Clowes tells us of the good work at North Shields, Blyth, and Benton Square, but no-one has carried the message to the fisherfolk of Cullercoats.”

“Amen, Brother. The Lord has already opened the door; for I have heard that three souls are holding house-meetings in that village.”

“Hallelujah, Brethren. The Lord is with us. Let us seek his guidance in prayer.”

The way was opened. So many souls were saved that house-meetings were soon inadequate.

The fisherfolk were captivated, and the society flourished. Originally the services were held in an old chapel jointly used by the Presbyterians, the Independents, and the Primitives, but in the end the latter were left in possession.



The North Shields pattern was repeating itself. The simplicity of the services, the fervent singing, and the democracy of the Primitive Methodists appealed to the local people. A Sunday School was founded in 1838, and as the years passed, the *Ranters* became a close-knit and leading group within the small but growing community that was Cullercoats; a community which earned its living mainly from the sea.

Life, danger, death and religion impinged upon one another as they do amongst sea-faring folk. The cobbles, skippered and manned by Primitive Methodists, served as the means of livelihood, and as the means of saving life, off the treacherous coast. The womenfolk who sold the fish, also cared for survivors as well as returning crews.

Imagination may catch the interaction of spiritual and practical needs at a church meeting in the 1860's.

"Mister Chairman, I understand that this meeting has been called to discuss expansion. Now, where is your faith? I propose that we start a new building scheme, not an extension scheme, and that we start it at once."

"I second that motion, Mister Chairman."

"Chairman! Before you put that to the meeting I would like to point out . . ."

". . . Haway lads, there's a ship on the rock off Brown's Bay! You'd better close the meeting, skipper."

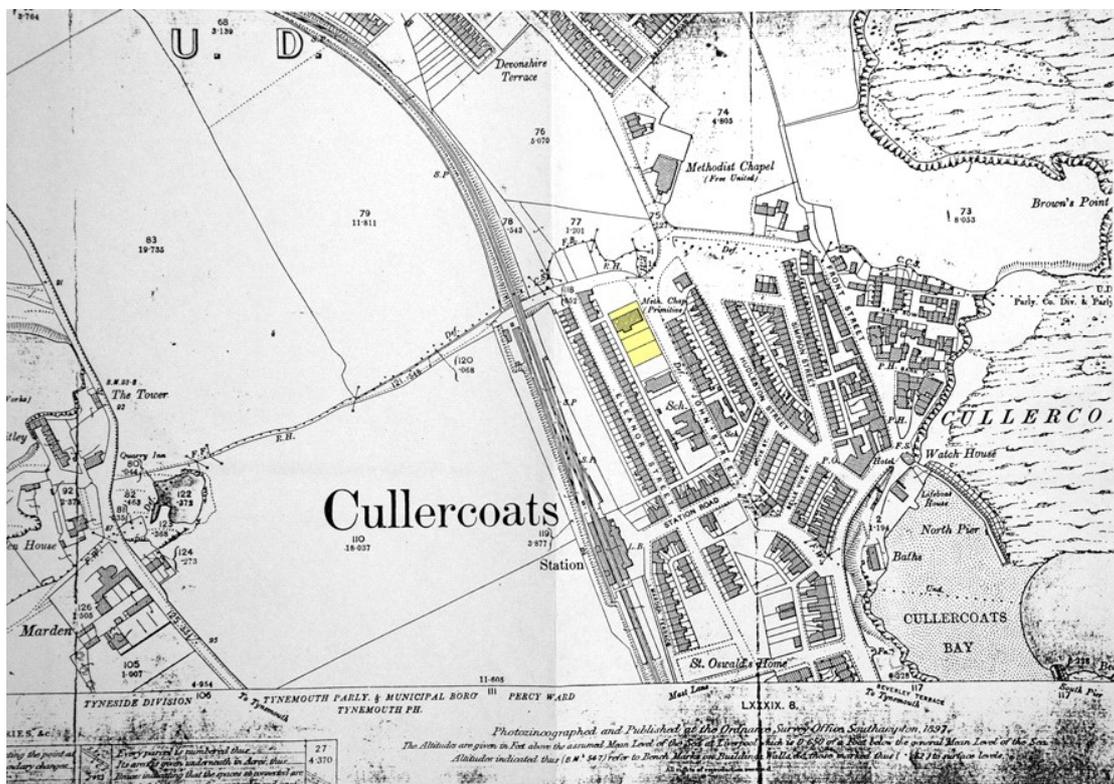
"Be with us, Father, as we go forward now to save these lives. May thy grace, thy peace and blessing be upon each one of us this night and for ever more. Amen."

"AMEN!"

"Haway lads! Divn't waste any time! Jakey, ye can tak Bard's place seeing he's badly. And Bessie, get them baths ready and have some extra hands ready for us when we come back. The tide'll be out and there'll be a long haul up the beach. Now come on and divn't waste any time . . ."



The plans laid at the interrupted meeting bore fruit. In 1868 revival had come to the North Shields Circuit and 600 were saved. How many of these belonged to Cullercoats we do not know, but there were so many that a larger chapel had to be built. The ladies of the Society, together with their Congregational and Presbyterian friends, held a bazaar. They raised £400, an amazing sum for a village community at that time. The new chapel was built in John Street, just west of the old Quaker burial ground, and steady growth of the Society continued.



The fame of the Fishermen's Chapel became known throughout the northern counties. To hundreds of summer visitors, the services were a novelty – the fisherfolk worshipping in their fisher dress and the choir, under the leadership of John Lisle, renowned for their singing, far and wide.

Thirty years passed. In 1894, the evangelist John Bayliffe records in his diary incidents from his mission in Cullercoats:

December 2nd. Small meeting addressed by Reverends Ewell, Richardson and self.

Sunday, December 3rd. Many. Spoke at Juvenile Missionary meeting in the afternoon.

Then following his subjects for the days leading up to Christmas:

Sunday 10th. Good prayer meeting at 7.30 a.m. Morning subject Luke 3 verse 4. Address to Sunday School. Evening subject John 5 verse 24. Five souls saved.

Monday 11th. John 3 vers 3.

Tuesday 12th. Matthew 18 verse 14. Two or three souls saved.

Wednesday 13th. Proverbs 49; Jeremiah 44. Four souls.

Friday 15th. Revelation 5 verse 6. Two souls.

Saturday 16th. Good testimony meeting at Cullercoats.

Sunday 17th. Twenty-seven at 7.30 a.m. prayer meeting. Gave story of conversion in lay school. Powerful time. Evening Subject 'The dying thief'. Full chapel. One soul.

Tuesday 19th. Three souls.

Wednesday 20th. Glorious season. 11 souls.

Thursday 21st. Supper. Short service after. Two young men were saved.

Friday 22nd. Three souls.

In a short period of twenty-one days, over forty people were added to the church in Cullercoats. The Bayliffe diary, too, contains some personal notes:

Enjoyed stay with Mrs. Holmes and family, very much. Misses Annie, Mary, Lizzie, Ada, Jennie, Jack. Had a good time among the fishermen. Much house-to-house visitation in company with John Taylor, Pick, Simpson, H. and Harry Taylor. Have pleasant memories of Alex Pettigrew, Andrew Taylor, the two Charlie Taylors, Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Small, Mr. Harrison, Mr. Short and Mr. Lisle, the misses Dawson, Miss Lizzie Armstrong, Belle, Arthur and others; also Mr. Richardson, the minister.

Familiar names. Continuity, like growth, is a hall-mark of Cullercoats Methodism. The Society had grown and outgrown its modest building. 1899 saw the stone-laying of a galleried chapel alongside the existing church in John Street, which thereafter continued in use as the Sunday School and for week-night activities.





CULLERCOATS NEW CHAPEL.

“With the building of the present handsome church in 1900, and the acquisition of an organ, the musical part of the service underwent a marked change. Charles Young succeeded in gathering a large and efficient choir, and with Mr. Stapylton, an able organist, gave Cullercoats services quite a modern attraction.”

For many years John Jefferson has seen to it that the pulpit was well supplied, and there is barely a man of note in the Connexion he has not succeeded in drawing to minister in the popular resort. Families like the Taylors, Smiths, Lises and Dawsons, have been for many years a tower of strength in the society. There are others now also taking a leading part, conspicuously Arthur Johnson and his family, Bowey, Hindmarsh and Thwaites.”

That was written in 1909. Five years later came war and with war, suffering and privation. It was less than three months old when the Tynemouth lifeboat was called upon

to carry out its most famous rescue. Its coxswain was a member of our church:

“On the last Saturday night in October, 1914, a great hurricane was blowing on the North-east Coast, where all of the lights had been put out . . . as a war measure. The hospital ship “Rohilla”, of 7,000 tons, with 229 souls on board, had become a total wreck on the rocks three-quarters of a mile from Whitby, on the Yorkshire coast, with tremendous seas washing over her, and some of the crew could be seen seeking safety in the rigging. The Whitby lifeboat had been badly damaged and rendered useless after it had landed two boatloads of survivors, and the rocket apparatus was unable to make connection owing to the gale.

“The “Rohilla” lay there, gradually breaking up, and the position appeared hopeless. When the news of the disaster reached Tynemouth, Major Burton, who was in command of the motor lifeboat “Henry Vernon”, along with Coxswain Robert Smith, made a fifty-mile dash through the dark, stormy night, and after nine-hours journey, the boat was guided within sight of the wreck by its coxswain.

“At daybreak they proceeded alongside . . . and gallant lifeboatmen took off the last 50 survivors, who had been on the wreck for more than fifty hours.

When coxswain Robert Smith, V.C., “Scraper Smith” as he was known to all, returned with his lifeboat to the Tyne the next afternoon, the steamers in the river gave their sirens full blast. The Mayor of Tynemouth waited for the landing of the crew and shook each member by the hand. Then they were carried into the town on the shoulders of the crowd.

The interchange between Mayor and Coxswain at the banktop has been recorded:

‘Well, Scraper, what sort of time have you had?’

‘Grand’

‘But how did you get all those people into the boat?’

'Like boxes o' herrin'; they couldn't move.'

'And that was all I was able to get out of him.'

Modesty was a part of the man as it was of others who have served the sea, their families and their church in the hardest of times.



Polly Donkin, who carried her creel for seventy years up the Derwent Valley was, like Smith, a member of the Fishermen's Chapel. Like him, too, she was honoured – for her work on behalf of the lifeboat, and the Royal Victoria Infirmary. Created a life-governor of these two institutions, she remained a humble servant of God, and a Cullercoats fishwife.

"I don't want money for myself. But I want to be good and to do good."

And in her kitchen in the village, there hung a text which summed up the strength of her simple faith:

"Don't worry! Smile!"

Between the wars, Cullercoats was changing. West of the railway, between Burnside Road and Links Avenue, houses sprang up. The centre of gravity was shifting away from the sea, towards Newcastle where the majority of its inhabitants now worked. Membership of John Street Society increased and, like the village, changed. But it was still a common sight on a Sunday morning, among the suits, the stiff white collars, the frocks and the cloche hats, to see in the back pews a stocky figure in dark blue fisherman's sweater, grey-haired and stubble-chinned; and to hear his voice, clear as a bell above the singing of the congregation; and during the sermon to hear, too, his heartfelt '*Hallelujahs*' as a point from the pulpit struck home. The last of the *Ranters*, perhaps.



Exodus

The spiritual and social life of the church was in good shape in 1939, and “Business as Usual” would not have been an inappropriate poster for the notice-board outside during the first three years of the war. Nights of blitz and days of unexpected drip bombing became accepted almost as the dangers of the sea had been accepted by the earlier generations.

Saturday, August 8th 1942 dawned like any other day. In the afternoon thirteen-year-old Denis Armstrong left his home in Percy Gardens to go down to the church. He let himself in as he did every Saturday, climbed to the organ loft and began to play one of his favourite tunes.



Newcastle Journal & North Mail, August 10th 1942

“Practising on the organ in a Methodist church where his father is organist, a boy was killed when an enemy plane, suddenly emerging out of heavy cloud, scored a direct hit which demolished the building in a ‘hit and run’ raid on a North East village on Saturday evening.

High explosive bombs were dropped, but the boy was the only victim. The church and adjoining hall were destroyed, and several houses severely damaged by the blast.

As the organ had been heard playing shortly before the raid, an impression gained currency that a choir practice was in progress. It was found, however, that the boy was the sole occupant of the church and his body was recovered shortly afterwards.

One bomb hit a hospital, and a third dropped near a farm but injured no one.

People in the streets saw the first bomb actually leaving the plane. There was some machine-gunning from the air; anti-aircraft guns went into action and as the raider disappeared seawards it appeared to be losing height.”



On Tuesday, August 11th, the following address was delivered by the Reverend Raymond V. Horn at Preston Cemetery Chapel:

This one of the occasions when our English language, rich though it is in expressive words, is inadequate to interpret the feelings of our hearts. There was a very real sense in which Denis Armstrong belonged to us all. He had created for himself a niche of his own in the worship and fellowship of our Church, and endeared himself to us by the very charm of his youthful personality. What Denis said and did was not infrequently the topic of conversation, and if ever he was absent from Sunday service, and he rarely was, we wondered why. His life has been cut short most tragically, but the richest memories of him will be alive with us for a very long time to come. His name from now on will be linked indissolubly with our Church. He has become part of its history and our memories of him will strengthen us in our resolutions as we look to the future. It is little avail at this moment attempting to explain the tragedy theologically, whether it was fate or anything else. Nobody knows – only God, and it is best left with Him. But these things we do know, that the boy is safe now with God, safe from harm, in that land where no foul weapon of war can hurt or destroy, but where the music of Heaven will be thrilling to his soul. And the God in whose keeping he is will also give comfort and strength and courage to those who are left behind. To them – the family – we express our most heartfelt sympathy, and with real faith we commit them to God's care.



Resolution for the future was not long in being made. Tragedy beget hope; and crisis, a firmness in spirit. Clearing up the debris and trying to rescue whatever could be saved after the bombing, Harry Taylor, with his customary sea-faring bluntness, was heard encouraging and cheering the helpers:

“We’ve lost the ship, but the crew are sound and we can build her again”.

The following Thursday, a special meeting of the Society was held to discuss whether they should disband and link with other churches in the same area – the official Methodist view; or somehow to continue as an entity.

“Shall we stand as an expression of our sympathy with Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong and Arthur?”

“Mr. Chairman, I would propose that we continue as a Society.”

“I second that.”

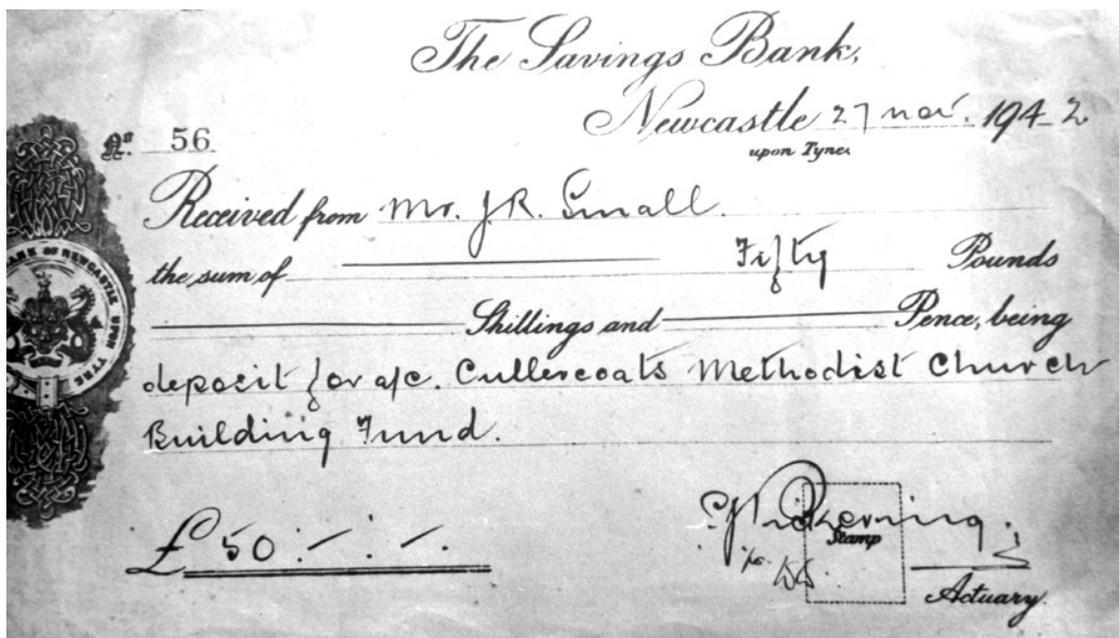
“Mr. Chairman, I propose that we set up a building fund now. Don’t waste any time. To give it a start, here’s a cheque for £50. Now, I want you to put a young man in charge of this fund, because some of us may not live to see the new chapel.”

“I support that motion, Mr. Chairman.”

“Question, please. Can a Society in debt get Connexional aid?”

“No, it can’t, and I know that we have a debt.”

“Then we should set up a fund immediately for donations, and call it the Armstrong Memorial Fund.”



The “Stable” Church

The Society began to plan and to work. Monks Haven Guest House, closed during the war, was offered as a meeting place and the only services of public worship missed were those on the day following the bombing.



The stable at the back of the house was converted into a chapel and Methodism in Cullercoats returned and drew inspiration from the fact that Christianity too had begun in a stable.

The Reverend William Dagg, a minister for 9 years, gave leadership and inspiration and, in an atmosphere of warm fellowship, membership of the church, the Sunday School and the youth organisation, began to grow again. Rockland House, in John Street, was bought to house these activities. Years of hard work followed to clear the Society's debt. House groups formed for fellowship and bible-study, and took on the task of money-raising for the new building, each group setting itself a target of £100.



The old site in John Street was cleared and sold. Alderman Fred Hindmarsh was authorised by the Church Council to enter into negotiation with the Duke of Northumberland's agent to purchase a large site on the Broadway at the head of Mast Lane.



On 30th June 1956, a Camp Meeting, in the best tradition of Primitive Methodism, was held on the site. The grandson of John Baycliffe, the evangelist, nailed the poster to the gate, and most of the families mentioned in his diary were also there in their new generations. The choir of the Fishermen's Mission led the singing.



On Sunday the 15th of September 1956 at 3pm a foundation stone-laying ceremony of the church and School Hall took place, led by the superintendent minister Rev. G.H. Hall. Twenty different individuals laid a stone or brick on behalf of all of those who helped raise the funds for this project, including one in memory of Polly Donkin (a historical figure in Cullercoats life). Even the Sunday School children laid bricks for their new Sunday School at a 6pm service that day.

Mr. G.F. Alderson, the Building Fund Secretary, gave the following statement:-

Receipts		Payments	
Sale of John Street site	1,122	Cost of new site	1,350
Sale of Rockland House	1,054	Legal charges	116
War damage	33,017	Cost of Premises	40,471
Donations and Special Efforts	8,992	Furnishings	3,915
Sir James Knott Trust	2,500	Architects' Fees	2,371
Connexional Chapel Fund	2,600	Quantity Surveyors' Fee	1,062
Total	49,285	Total	49,285

On Saturday the 14th of September 1957, at 2:45pm, the new church was opened by Mrs. Lily Taylor (the widow of that visionary Harry Taylor who said "We've lost the ship, but the crew is sound, we can build again").



She received the key from the architect, Mr. R.N. Mackellar –

“This building has been erected to the Glory of God for the purposes of the Methodist Church I pray you take now the key and open the door.”



Rebirth

So the new Church was opened and dedicated. A happy and memorable day indeed! Since that day the work of God has continued at Cullercoats. Inspiration and vision have been maintained and, in some vital aspects of the work, even exceeded expectations. The Sunday School, which claimed to have 150 scholars in 1957, soon increased towards the 400 mark, which number has been largely maintained to the present [1974]. A high standard of teaching has been achieved by an enthusiastic and capable staff. Other youth activities have made their mark in the Church's ongoing life – uniformed organisations such as Scouts, Guides, Cubs, Brownies, and Rangers, a flourishing youth club and an expanding youth fellowship – all contributing to our life together in their own specific ways. A pre-school Play Group is a vital community service for busy mothers and their children, meeting each weekday morning in school term time. The Sunday morning Crèche enables parents to worship, happy in the knowledge that their children are well cared for.

Fellowships for both men and women exist and, in some cases, abound. From Badminton to Bible Study, and from choral work to Coffee & Chat, there is a wide range of activity. The Friday Luncheon Club provides food and companionship to elderly and lonely people, and the Retired Men's Club, which is run on the premises by the Centre Club, maintains a stimulating programme on Wednesday mornings. In recent years, study groups have offered opportunity for discussion on many relevant issues in members' homes, and have also been the means of forging closer links with Christians from other churches in the area.

Cullercoats shares a Church Fellowship with St. Margaret's [*now pulled down*] and the Fishermen's Mission

during the winter months, and there has been a growing realisation of the need to study the Bible and to pray together in order to strengthen Christian experience and to provide basic equipment in terms of understanding and fellowship so that the Church may be more involved in evangelism. Now the ministers of these three Methodist churches work as a team in all sorts of ways so that duplication of effort may be avoided as far as possible and real unity of heart and mind might become reality.

This then is the continuing story. We continue to worship, pray, serve and witness in a multitude of ways and activities. Yet it is not the activity which keeps the Church alive, nor is it the organisation (like all Methodist Churches, Cullercoats has been involved in the Restructuring Process of 1974), neither is it in personalities, of which Cullercoats has (and has had) a fair number. No, we are all dependent upon the Holy Spirit who is the One who renews guides and empowers. Without Him, and without the Lord Jesus Christ to whom he points, the activities of the Church are indistinguishable from other organisations which seek the betterment of man. The way, therefore, for the present and the future, is to be in tune with His purposes for our lives and for His Church, and to continue to follow the example of John Wesley who sought to “offer Christ” to all.

Let us conclude this short history with the words of the Apostle Paul as recorded in his Letter to the Ephesians, Chapter 3, verse 20 (NEB):

“Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or conceive, by the power which is amongst us, to Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus from generation to generation evermore. Amen”

(End of 1974 text)

So concluded the text of the “Short History of Cullercoats Methodist Church” as printed in November 1974, but what happened next? Was there anything else of interest?

Well, sadly, around about 1900, the Lisle family, who were institutional in setting up the first church, were celebrating a family event and dressed their daughters up in the traditional fisher-women’s clothes, but were refused entry to the church with phrases like “*You can’t come in here dressed like that!*”.

This affront to the family, who considered God did not care what you were dressed like (especially if you were fisher-folk like the first disciples), led Mr. Lisle (who was the famous choir leader) to resign from the John Street church, along with half the choir, and start a new church built entirely by voluntary labour called *The Fishermen’s Mission*. But you will have to look at *their* history for more details.



Shortly after the new 1957 building was completed, a new extension had to be added onto the end of both halls to accommodate the growing Sunday school, and in 1966 a “temporary” (?) Youth Hut was added to cater for the still growing youth movements. 1973 saw a newspaper plea for more teachers for the Sunday school of 400 scholars, as we only had 55 teachers left!

This growth was mainly due to the work of the first ministers (William Dagg, Geoffrey Buswell, and Donald English) drawing attention from an expanding population to the area, along with a very receptive group of church members. Remember that this was the time before television had become commonplace. Sadly, from about this time onwards, other social attractions seemed to start making inroads into our youngsters’ lives. The 1970s was the end of the first lot of “baby boomers” and the second generation was just starting.

Still there was plenty going on at the church which always seemed to have the building occupied. There was even a drama group that gave regular performances throughout the year.

I still remember when I first attended Cullercoats, in the late 1970s, having to queue outside the church just to get into the service. We all shook hands in greeting with the door stewards as we were handed hymn books, bibles, order of service books, and the ubiquitous notices. This procedure was repeated on the way out as we handed them back, but of course this time the minister (and almost always accompanied by his wife) was at the end of the line where a few (?) words of exchange seemed to be the “*de rigueur*”. On many occasions it was the minister’s wife that seemed to get the most of these exchanges. Yet no one seemed ever to be in a hurry to leave the church after a service. There always seemed to be so much for everyone to catch up on.



The church did not appear to have had an office as such when it was built, just a minister's vestry and a choir's vestry. So on the occasion of the church's 25th anniversary in 1982, these two room areas were doubled by an extension. The minister's vestry was pushed back down a corridor to give a side room for the counting of the collection, and the choir's vestry became a larger "quiet" meeting room. It was not until 1993 that this corridor wall was removed to turn the "pokey" counting room into a proper office with a part-time secretary to buffer the minister's vestry from direct access to the crush hall and ensure more privacy and confidentiality during pastoral meetings.

In 1994, the kitchen was revamped, and the first ramp for disabled access to the central crush hall was built.



In 1995, the church windows, which were mainly single glazing in a diamond matrix of lead supports, began to sag so much that the weather was coming through them, and they were in danger of collapsing altogether. These were replaced by tall double glazed units with the leading on the inside. This also solved a problem of protecting our special stained glass windows (these had been vandalised in 1984 with nearly the loss of their entire inscriptions) as this outer double layer was now almost stone-proof.

2006 saw the introduction of our first audio-visual computerised display system, which replaced our

overhead projector of acetates, enabling entire services of hymn displays, power-point presentations, DVD clips and other electronic material to be pre-loaded for each service. A 20-input mixer also enabled us to use radio-microphones along with instrumental pick-ups, to give us a far more flexible system.

2007, our anniversary year on the present site, saw an even bigger change. We replaced our oak panelled pews with comfortable well cushioned chairs. The consultation discussions for this almost sacrilegious event commanded a turn-out that exceeded the normal annual church meetings. Yet it was accepted and most of the dissenters now agree that it was a good thing.

We were now able to arrange special services in an oval around a centrally placed communion table, and other such arrangements. Other organised events now took place that benefit from a more informal seating arrangement. We even found that our baptismal services evoked comments from non-religious guests such as *"I didn't know that churches were like this!"*.

We were starting to get a reputation, and suddenly baptismal parties were inviting a hundred guests each! But how can you accommodate a "family" service which normally attracts around 200 congregational members, when two baptisms to be included results in 400 people trying to get into a church designed to hold just over 300?

Our present membership stands at 364. We have been bucking the trend of declining membership that is occurring elsewhere, so we must be doing something right. Hopefully we can continue in God's grace and to do his work for the foreseeable future.

S.B.Morrison, July 2007

**“Then let us pray that come it may -
As come it will for a’ that -
That sense and worth o’er a’ the earth
May bear the gree, for a’ that!**

***For a’ that, and a’ that,
It’s coming yet for a’ that.
That man to man, the world o’er,
Shall brothers be for a’ that!”***

Robert Burns (1759-1796)

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William S Garson:	The Origin of the Tyne Lifeboat Service

Acknowledgements and Thanks

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I too am grateful for these past members' contribution, since I did but little research to confirm their work and only managed a few additional facts to their work, as well as adding a few of the many photographs I was able to obtain or take myself.

I also acknowledge the assistance of the many contributors of photographs and other ephemera. My thanks go especially to Ida Lawson, Stan Smith and Frank Gray.

Stewart B Morrison, July 2007

List of Ministers

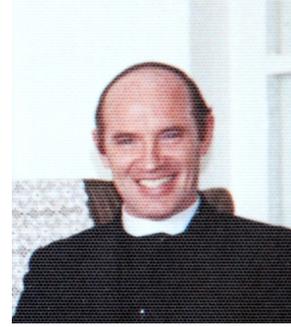
1833	James Bilson
1834	James Watson Thomas Smith
1835	John Wrightson
1836-1838	John Wilson
1838	A Coulson
1839	Christopher Hallam
1840-1842	G McReadie
1842-1844	William Fulton
1844	John Hedley
1845-1847	Colin C McKechnie
1847-1849	Thomas Greenfield
1849-1851	Adam Dodds
1851-1855	William Alderson
1855	William Dent
1856-1860	James Foggon
1860-1861	Charles Priestley
1862	Francis Purves
1863-1866	Robert Clemitson
1866-1870	Ebenezer Hall
1870-1873	John Snaith
1873-1875	William Bowe
1875-1877	William Welford
1877-1881	George Lewins
1881-1885	John G Binney
1885-1888	George Armstrong
1888-1889	Samuel Horton
1889-1893	Thomas Sellors
1893-1897	John Richardson
1897-1898	Henry Errington
1893-1901	William Raistrick
1901-1906	Joseph Kidd Ellwood
1906-1910	George W Wellburn
1910-1915	David Cooke
1915-1916	James Clark
1916-1920	F Clifford Taylor
1920-1921	Hugh A Davidson
1921-1924	William H Holtby
1924-1927	James W Swarbrick
1927-1935	William E Bellew
1935-1937	James G Rolley
1937-1940	Eric C Ferriday
1940-1941	Philip J Fisher
1941-1944	Raymond V Horn
1944-1950	Stanley K Lamming
1950-1959	William Dagg
1959-1966	Geoffrey Buswell
1966-1972	Donald English
1972-1973	Denis Inman
1973-1975	David K Roberts
1975-1979	J David Bridge
1979-1989	Philip Beuzeval
1989-1995	Peter C Graves
1995-1996	Arthur Temple
1996-2001	Lionel E Osborn
1999-2004	Nick Moxon
2001-	Stuart Earl
2004-	Jona Sewell

A Short History of Cullercoats Methodist Church



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Geoffrey Buswell



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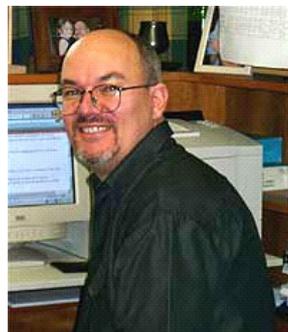
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